A Perfect Pen

Suppose you were about to put on the market a new line of pens. Since you know personal taste varies, you plan to have a variety of types, ball point, acrylic tip, as well as a cartridge type to hold ink, plus various sized points to suit individual preferences. You have a terrific group on your staff to make those decisions for you. What you’re concerned with is the basic question. What makes any pen a good pen for any user?

A basic property is one that won’t vary from person to person. For example, one basic property of a good pen is producing a continuous line. No matter of taste, on the other hand would be the color of the pen.

**TASK 1:** Divide the class into 3 parts. Appoint someone to be recorder in each.

**Group One:** List all the things you can think of that would make the pen an awful pen. Don’t include things that are a matter of personal taste. Suggestion: Pretend you are going to devise the world’s worst pen, what would you include?

**Group Two:** List all the characteristics that make up a really good pen.

**Groups Three:** Examine the pens. What is there about the good ones that make them better than the “junkers.” Make a list of these characteristics. Keep your list limited to basic characteristics, not things like color or decorations choice. After you’ve had a chance to examine the pens, give them to the other groups for examination.

**TASK II:** Make a master list of the criteria (standards) you have developed for rating pens that don’t depend on matters of individual preference.

**TASK III:**  Prepare a Pen Rating Matrix and rate some pens in class.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PENS: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| B. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| D. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| E. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Use this scale for each criterion, as you rate each pen.

4 = satisfies the criterion completely  
 2 or 3 = satisfy criteria partially  
 1 = does not satisfy the criteria at all